

Traditional vs Hybrid vs Self-Publishing

Before you do anything, understand the differences of the various publishing options and how your goals and values align with them.

ASPECT	TRADITIONAL PUBLISHING	HYBRID PUBLISHING	SELF-PUBLISHING
Cost	No cost. The upfront costs are typically borne by the publisher, not the author. However, it can be highly competitive and challenging to secure a traditional publishing deal.	Authors share the costs with the publisher, which could mean moderate upfront costs. This is approximately £8,000.	Authors bear the upfront cost and controls how much is spent on every element of the process. This could be as little as £500.
Learning Curve	Low, as the entire production and publishing are managed by the publisher.	Moderate. Typically, this means the author doesn't have to learn anything about editing, typesetting, cover design, distribution and book marketing copy BUT needs to learn and manage their book publishing campaign aka. the marketing.	Typically high. The author has to learn about how the industry works, how to find and select the best people, or learn to do the work themselves.
Control	Low. Publisher controls most aspects.	Moderate. Some control retained by author, especially on book title, cover and typeset.	High. The Author retains full control. This is both a good thing and bad - especially on the quality front.
Online Distribution	Distribution is typically through the publisher's established network, which might limit the channels through which the book is sold. Having said that, the network mostly consists of highly-credible outlets.	Varied. Some publishers focus mainly on Amazon and getting the book stocked online at Waterstones and Barnes & Noble, whilst others offer wider distribution channels compared to traditional publishing, though at additional costs.	Amazon only, or similar to the Hybrid model, depending on the distribution method. Getting the book to the most popular bookstores may take a little bit longer.
Offline Distribution	The book is very likely to appear at physical bookstores as the publisher is likely to have great relationships with book buyers.	In the author's hands at large.	In the author's hands.
Marketing Support	Marketing support can be minimal, especially for new or lesser-known authors. Often, significant marketing efforts are reserved for established or high-profile authors.	The level of marketing support varies. Higher-end publishers may offer guidance at the later stage of the publishing process and basic materials such as graphics, bestseller stickers etc. Others will not.	Due to the lower cost of publishing, authors typically have a bigger budget to spend on marketing.
Royalties	Royalties can be low as they are shared with the publisher, and the publisher recoups the costs of publication first. Authors typically receive royalties in the range of 5-15% per sale, though this can vary based on the publisher and the individual contract.	A moderate level of royalties as costs are shared, and there might be a better revenue-sharing agreement in place with the author. Authors might expect to receive a royalty rate in the range of 30-50%. However, this too can vary widely.	High royalty rates as authors keep a significant portion of the revenues generated from book sales, reflecting the investment they made in the publishing process. Typically around 60% - 100% of the RRP sale.
Book Printing Cost	Authors often have to purchase their own books at retail price or maybe a slight discount, making this option the most expensive for	Hybrid publishers may offer authors the ability to purchase copies of their books at a discounted rate, making this option more affordable than	The most cost-effective option for buying author copies, as the author pays for just the cost of the print with little or no uplift.

buying author copies.

traditional publishing for author copies. Be mindful that most make a profit here too.

Service

The service in traditional publishing can be formal and corporate. The interaction between the author and the publisher might be limited and structured, with less room for personalised engagement. The excitement and involvement can be lower as the publisher has control over many aspects of the process.

Hybrid publishing can offer a more personalised but still structured service. There is a higher level of involvement from the author compared to traditional publishing, and possibly more excitement as the author has a say in various aspects of the publishing process. Communication may be more frequent and collaborative.

The communication style is tailored to meet the author's preferences, promoting excitement and involvement throughout the process. For example, Brandspire values open communication and encourages authors to be actively engaged in each stage of the publishing journey, ensuring a fulfilling experience.